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musical critic should be a musician; and we hope to see the day when even in a country newspaper it shall be thought necessary to employ a writer upon the art whose knowledge of the subject shall entitle his articles, if not to public admiration, at least to public respect.

CRYSTAL PALACE.

THE Concerts at this establishment continue to be conducted with, if possible, increased vigour and enterprise. Madame Schumann's pianoforte performance has been a great feature during the month, the public, with one voice, agreeing with our high estimate of her powers, in spite of a certain division of opinion in the camp of critics. Herr Joachim has also been delighting the Sydenham audience in some of his best music; and the orchestral works are as well selected and as carefully executed as ever. On the 13th ult., a series of Wednesday Concerts was inaugurated, for the performance (according to the advertisement) of instrumental music, not generally included in the Saturday Concerts, and for the *débuts* of young artists. This is a very excellent idea; and we have no doubt that it will be most ably carried out.

PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.

THE fifty-fifth season of this Society commenced on the 11th ult., with a very excellent concert, the interest of which was enhanced by the appearance of a new conductor, in the place of Professor Bennett, who resigned, as our readers are aware, at the conclusion of the last season. Without entering into the question as to how Mr. Cusins gained his election to the vacant conductorship, believing, as we do, that it is the critic's duty simply to judge of his fitness for the office, we are bound to say that we have rarely heard the band go with greater accuracy, and that the *tempi* throughout two trying symphonies, Mendelssohn's No. 1, in C minor, and Beethoven's No. 7, in A, were not only clearly indicated, but rigidly adhered to. A certain coarseness, perceptible to all listeners, however, could not, of course, escape the conductor's ears, and it is in the remedying of this radical defect that the new director's real power will be shown; for it is no part of the duty of an artist who accepts so responsible a post, to endure what he may find it difficult to cure. Besides the symphonies we have mentioned, Professor Bennett's charming Overture "The Naiads," and Cherubini's "Les Abencérages," were performed; and Herr Joachim played Spohr's ninth violin concerto, with a refinement and intellectual appreciation of every phrase of this remarkable composition, which almost made his hearers forgetful of its extreme difficulty. The vocalists were Miss Louisa Pyne and Mr. W. H. Cummings; but the music chosen, or which they had, perhaps, chosen for themselves, was by no means effective. Hummel's romance, "L'Ombrosa notte vien," was delicately sung by Miss Pyne, and Mr. Cummings gave as much effect as he could to Mozart's "Costanza," from *Il Serraglio*; but the duet from Gounod's *Reine de Saba*, afforded so weak an example of the composer's powers, that even his ardent admirers, who seem bound to supply a reason for his failures, must admit that the less such works are performed the better will it be for M. Gounod's fame.

MUSICAL SOCIETY.

THE First Concert of this Society for the present season took place on the 20th ult., when a programme of unusual interest was provided. Mendelssohn's *First Walpurgis-Nacht* has been unaccountably neglected by those musical societies which should have been foremost in proving to an English audience how replete it is with those dramatic and highly-coloured pictures of a past age, for the treatment of which Mendelssohn stands almost unrivalled. If in *Athalie* and *Antigone* we feel the real spirit of what we are taught to believe was the essence of Greek music, so in the *Walpurgis-Nacht* we live again in the time of the Druids; and almost sympathize with their terror at the approach of their Christian persecutors to disturb the celebration of their religious rites. In the whole of descriptive music we know nothing more truthful than the wild overture which precedes the vocal portion of this fanciful work; and the choruses are amongst the most vivid and truly dramatic bequeathed to us even by Mendelssohn. The execution of this work was in many respects open to objection. A grave error was in the first place committed by the engagement of Mr. Leigh Wilson to sustain the whole of the tenor music; for, however this vocalist may create effect in the warbling of simple ballads, the truth must be told that he is utterly incompetent to interpret music of such a high class of writing as that contained in the *Walpurgis-Nacht*. Then the chorus was by no means equal to the task; for not only was the intonation often false, but the points of attack were frequently uncertain. Miss Julia Elton and Mr. Lewis Thomas were, however, efficient in all the important music which fell to their share; and the orchestra went as well as we could expect, considering the very small amount of rehearsal which had been bestowed upon the work. Unfortunately, however, this want of due preparation for the performance of the greatest compositions is the rule, and not the exception, in England; and our remarks, therefore, must apply rather to the system than to any special instance of it. The "Choral Fantasia" of Beethoven went very much better, Madame Schumann playing the pianoforte part with a grace and finish which left nothing to be desired. Madame Schumann also performed Mozart's Pianoforte

Concerto in D minor in a manner which charmed all the admirers of true and legitimate playing; the slow movement especially being sung upon the instrument in a manner too rarely heard even in our concert-rooms. A small chorus, with orchestral accompaniments, by Schumann, called "Gipsy Life," pleased the audience by its quaint subject so much as to elicit an encore; but it is a weak—and we presume an early—work of its composer, and was, we think, scarcely worth resuscitating. Haydn's charmingly fresh Symphony in E flat, letter T, was well performed by the orchestra, and Wallace's overture to *Maritana* was selected to play the audience out. Mr. Alfred Mellon conducted the band with his usual intelligence and ability.

MR. HENRY LESLIE'S CHOIR.

THE second Subscription Concert of the season which took place on the 28th February, contained some specimens of delicate part-music which displayed the choir to the utmost advantage. A well-written and effective madrigal, by the concert-giver, "Charm me asleep," two part songs by Mr. Joseph Barnby (flowing and simple in construction, like all that composer's works), and a part song, "Now lie on love," by Mr. G. A. Macfarren (written with the skill of a practised musician), were the novelties of the concert. Mendelssohn's psalm for a double choir, "Why rage fiercely the heathen," was excellently sung, in spite of its excessive difficulty. The encores were Henry Smart's "Shepherd's Farewell," Samuel Reay's "Dawn of Day," Fleming's "Integer Vita," and Benedict's "Hunting Song." A highly creditable performance of Mendelssohn's "Variations Sérieuses," by Miss Madeline Schiller, was the instrumental feature of the evening; and Miss Edith Wynne, as the only solo vocalist, received well-merited applause in all her songs, especially in Haydn's canzonet, "My Mother bids me bind my hair," which was most enthusiastically encored. Mendelssohn's music to "Antigone" was repeated with increased effect on the 13th ult. The programme on this occasion, instead of being devoted exclusively to the works of Mendelssohn, was selected from various authors; and, in consequence of severe indisposition, Mr. Wallworth replaced Miss Kate Saville as reader.

GENOA.

THE promised repetition of Mozart's 12th *Mass* by Maestro Lavagnino, took place in the Oratorio dei Filippini, a spot peculiarly fitted, by its harmonious proportions and beauty of ornamentation, for the purpose. Signora Paulina Veneri sang the principal soprano part, while the treble and alto chorus was supplied by the lady members of Signora Beati's Philharmonic class. The series of six Classical Concerts given by Professor Lavagnino at Villa Novello, has been followed by a second series of six more; giving unequivocal proof of the success which has attended this spirited attempt to introduce a taste for good music in a city which has hitherto been reproached with caring for none other than the reverse of sterling compositions. It has given rise to a similar experiment in the same laudable direction, for Professor Bossoia has announced his intention of giving a series of concerts for the production of Symphonies and overtures by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, &c., at the Paganini Theatre, in Genoa.

It is mentioned in the Italian papers, that at Arezzo, the birth-place of Guido Monaco (known to the world as Guido Aretinus, or Guido d'Arezzo, the inventor of the system of musical notation; for further particulars of whom, see page 155, "*Hawkins' History of Music*," Novello's Edition, 1853), it is in contemplation to construct a spacious street and piazza, which is to bear the name of the illustrious inventor. The street is to lead from the Railway Station to the piazza, which is to contain a monumental sculpture, in honour of the renowned Guido. Towards the defrayment of the expenses of this construction, contributions will be received from all parts of the civilised world.

SCHUBERT SOCIETY.—The First Concert of the season was given at the Beethoven Rooms on the 14th ult., before a crowded audience. The works of Spohr occupied the whole of the first part; and the second part was miscellaneous. The principal works performed were Spohr's Trio, Op. 124, most artistically rendered by Madlle. Rosetta Alexandre (Pianist to the King of Prussia), Monsieur Vivien (violin), and Herr Schubert (violinello); two pianoforte pieces played by Madlle. Kinkel (one by Schubert, in which she was encored) and Benedict's Pianoforte Fantasia, "The Prince of Wales." The vocalists were Madame Sauerbreay, Miss Marie Stocken, Miss Adelaide Bliss, Miss Barry Eldon, and Miss Mina Poole, the last-named lady being extremely successful in Lachner's "Oh happy is the little bird," with violoncello *obligato* by Herr Schubert. If this concert be a proof of the manner in which Herr Schubert intends to proceed in his enterprise, he is fairly entitled to the good wishes of all who desire the promotion of a healthy taste for music in this country.

THE MUSTEL ORGAN.—On Saturday the 16th ult., an instrument under the above name was exhibited by M. Lemmens, who performed upon it a selection of music admirably adapted to display its extraordinary capabilities. The harmonium is one of the very best specimens of French manufacture; and the newly invented mechanical contrivance, called "Dawes's patent melody attachment," has a singularly beautiful effect, the melody being kept, as clearly defined and as separate from the accompaniment, as if it were played by another instrument. One of the great advantages, too, of the Mustel Organ is that the most rapid pianoforte passages